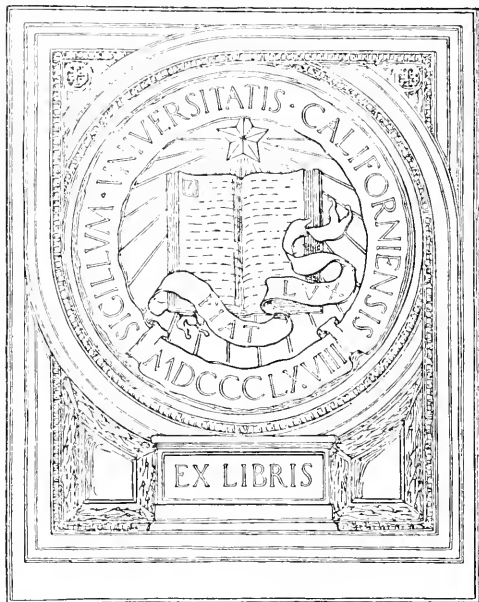


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The Oregon State Penitentiary

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AT LOS ANGELES



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INTRODUCTORY



HERE are but few events that arouse public interest to a higher pitch than an escape from the penitentiary. The glaring headlines of the daily press, making the most of sensational news, thrills the reader with a feeling akin to fear, and yet, in many cases arouses a sort of sentimental sympathy for the underdog, and admiration for the man with nerve enough to stake his life for a fling at the fortune wheel of liberty.


County jail escapes are frequent enough to cause but little comment outside of the particular community effected, but an escape from the States' stronghold -- well, that is a different matter, corresponding with the difference between night and day. While it is true that most escapes from all State penitentiaries are made by trustees (men who work outside the walls without immediate guards, and simply walk away from the job) yet occasionally a prisoner with an overgrown bump of ingenuity and daring will carry out a carefully prepared scheme, the result of much study and planning that would do credit to an army general or a Napoleon of finance. And even if captured eventually, as he usually is, he is generally accorded a certain amount of respect by other inmates and officials alike. However that does not deter the culprit

from serving an extra amount of time for his ill-advised caper.

The "walk-away," or common garden variety of escape is of no consequence as they are usually returned in a few hours or days at the most. It is the sensational escapes, brought to a climax by the man of daring and courageous ability, that will be related in the following pages which will be found of more or less interest to all readers.

There is one thing noticeable that should not pass without mention. During the past year, up to this date, (September 1921 to September 1922) not an escape or walk-away has occurred from this prison— a most remarkable record indeed, when it is remembered that all previous years have given an average of one per month. This prison has had many wardens and other officials in its time, but to the present administration, Warden J. W. Lewis, Deputy E. C. Halley, and Principal Keeper A. L. Kendall must be given credit for a record that is remarkable. Gangs working outside have been just as numerous, there are as many or more trustees, and no privileges have been curtailed— opportunities have not been lacking, yet the inmates stick. The reason? Well, that is a book of itself, the title of which might read, "Humane vs. Brutal Prisons."

THE TRACY-MERRILL ESCAPE

N THE 22nd day of March, 1899, Harry Tracy, prison number 4088, and David Merrill, prison number 4089, were received at the Oregon State Penitentiary from Multnomah County, where they were sentenced for assault and robbery.

Tracy was born in Wisconsin; was twenty-four years of age, 5 feet 8½ inches in height, and had previously served a term in the Utah State Penitentiary.

Merrill was a native of Washington, age 28, height 5 feet 8¾ inches, with a previous record in the Oregon State Penitentiary as number 2314.

Tracy was under sentence of twenty years and Merrill thirteen years. Their escape was made on the 9th day of June, 1902, just three years and 77 days after their arrival. So much for prison statistics.



Their conduct as prisoners was bad and only a short time after their receipt they began to cause the prison officials constant trouble, and are said to have been ironed with "Oregon boots" and closely watched. The escape which took place on the morning of the date named followed an excursion to Salem on the day before, during which the party or parties who placed the guns and ammunition in the moulding room are supposed to have reached Salem, and under cover of darkness scaled the prison walls and placed them where they were found by Tracy. Only someone who was familiar with the prison and knew its inside workings and Tracy's place in the moulding room could have succeeded in escaping the guard patrol and have carried out the plans so well. That the escape was well planned is evident. Tracy for some time prior to the escape had been studying a map of Oregon and thoroughly familiarized himself with roads, trails, towns, etc., on the route over which he afterward passed. That he had been expecting outside help for sometime is shown by the fact that for several weeks prior to that memorable morning he would, upon entering the moulding room to begin work, hasten at once to his floor and search among the boxes and under the dust paper with which it was supplied. Al-



though no particular attention was paid to his actions at the time, after his escape they were recalled and spoken of by prisoners who worked on adjoining floors. Tracy and his associate in the escape, Merrill, were cellmates and were also employed on the same floor. It is supposed they induced some ex-convict with whom they had been familiar, to return and bring the firearms with which they made their escape. A year or two later it developed that a former convict, Charles Monte by name, who served time with Tracy and Merrill, and was quite intimate with them, had made the boast that he was the party who had scaled the walls and placed guns and amunition in a place previously designated where they would eventually be found by the right parties. Monte was arrested, tried and convicted, and on July 15, 1905, was sentenced to life imprisonment. His boasting nature and desire to show off as a "bad man from Bitter Creek," fell to zero when a life jolt was handed him, and at the time much doubt was expressed as to his ability and nerve to pull off such a stunt. To know the man, nothing but a boastful, whining mongrel, was to immediately become convinced that he was utterly incapable of such a deed of daring. However he was kept in confinement over nine years before he was re-



leased, a sadder but not much wiser man.

To describe the escape by all the reports which have been given by "eye witnesses" would be a big task. What follows is about as near the truth as is possible to get it from the maze of conflicting stories told:

Prisoners were counted as they lined up to march to the shops. The count had just been made. Tracy and Merrill were at or near the head of the line which contained something like 150 prisoners. As they entered the moulding room Tracy went at once to his floor, as was his custom, and searching there found the guns. Taking up a 30-30 Winchester he threw the lever and raising it to his shoulder fired at and killed the moulding room guard, Mr. Ferrell, who was standing with his back towards him just a short distance away. Mr. Ferrell, who was pacing, as was his custom, on the walk leading to the other departments, lived only an instant after being shot. Tracy, reloading his rifle, is said to have went toward the murdered gaurd far enough to note the effect of his shot, and then, with Merrill, who had secured the other rifle to assist him, he ordered the other prisoners into an opposite part of the moulding room. He then went to a window facing on the front yard and began firing at the guards in post number one. After



firing several shots he and Merrill made their way through into the front shops. After passing through an alleyway leading into the adjoining department they were encountered by a prisoner who was shot, it is said, in trying to wrest the gun from Tracy's hands. After this shooting they made their way through the front shop and securing a ladder in the carpenter shop, came out on the opposite side of the shops and facing the west wall. As they emerged from the building, screened by piles of old boxes then standing there, and which served as a shield, they began firing at the guards occupying towers commanding a view of that portion of the yard. Mr. Tiffany, who had been occupying the northeast corner tower, had been transferred to a position as turnkey in the warden's office, was present on the wall explaining guard duties to his successor, Mr. Ross, when the shooting began. As the outlaws emerged from the shop and commenced to fire from their hidden position behind the boxes, Mr. Ross, to whom he had handed his rifle, was struck by one of the shots and knocked from the wall path on which the guards patrol. Mr. Tiffany, to secure the gun which had fallen to the ground, jumped from the wall, intending to secure it and return to guard that portion of the wall. In the meantime



Tracy and Merrill, supposing most likely that they had killed or badly wounded the guards in the vacant tower, but unable to silence the rifle fire from the tower on their right, turned to the left, and still keeping behind the boxes which screened them made their way towards the north wall. Occasionally the guard would see them as they passed through an opening, but although he fired several shots and stood bravely on the wall, exposed to a dangerous rifle fire, could not get a successful shot.

After reaching the end of the shop buildings the outlaws turned, and still protected by a corner of the building around which they passed, crossed to the wall. As they reached it, placing the ladder, one of them stood guard while the other passed to the top of the wall. In nearing the wall they had come out in plain sight of the guard occupying the northwest corner tower. This guard, Mr. Jones, who was killed, looking for the escapes elsewhere and guarding the front portion of the prison yard, was watching in a partly exposed position, and is said to have been shot from the wall.

Reaching the ground on the outside of the enclosure, Tracy and Merrill then turned and following along the wall in an easterly direction turn-



ed the corner and came upon two guards who were then making their way back to remount the wall. Before they were seen they had them covered and ordered them to throw up their hands and march. Using them as a shield to protect them from the rifle fire of the guard in the tower they had been unable to silence, and within range of which they had again come, they passed to a position of safety and then ordered the guards to return. As they started to do so Mr. Tiffany was shot in the back and killed in the same cold-blooded manner as was Mr. Ferrell. The entire break, from the time the first shot was fired, to Mr. Tiffany's death did not consume more than five minutes.

The warden and his assistant, who often stood discussing the day's procedure and details of prison management for some time after the line had passed, were yet standing where they had stood to count when the first firing began.

Hastening at once to the house, the warden gave the alarm. Guards were armed and sent out and our then deputy warden, Mr. Ad Dilly, armed with a Winchester rifle, ran the full length of that portion of the prison wall leading from the prison buildings to the tower in which guard Jones, whom he had seen fall, lay dying. The escape by this



time had been effected and the outlaws were gone. When particulars of the state of affairs in the moulding room had been obtained (it is said by telephone from the office) a prisoner carrying a flag of truce was sent from the house to the shops to give medical attention, and to also lead the prisoners back to the house, where they were counted and locked in their cells.

The wounded prisoner, almost dead from the loss of blood, was carried hastily to the hospital, where measures were taken to arrest the flow. Afterwards one of his legs, badly shattered by the discharging rifle in his encounter with Tracy, was amputated above the knee, and still later he was pardoned.

Tracy, who was a dead shot in the exact meaning of the word, set the whole country by the ears, until it was "Tracy mad." With the coolest kind of dime-novel daring he escaped time and again from apparently absolute traps, only to show up a few days later after some new adventure and repeat the performance.

His trail led through Salem, Portland and Seattle, finally running eastward toward the Hole-in-the-Wall country, which he never reached.

All along the way he spread terror among the country-folk, often walking into a farmhouse



behind a gun and demanding food, and in one instance kidnaping a swede farmhand whom he held for several days as a personal servant.

His duel with Merrrill and the slaughter of three men in battle with peace officers and newspaper men near Seattle were the great outstanding features of the chase. About the latter end of June he and Merrill, then together in the State of Washington, had a quarrel of some kind and agreed to fight out their differences with rifles. They were to walk a certain distance apart and then turn and fire. Tracy did not keep faith with Merrill, and turning, shot and killed him as he was walking away. However, when the body supposed to be Merrill's, whom, report said, Tracy had slain, was brought back to prison, many of the men seeing it, were quite positive that the remains were those of some one else than Merrill. "Bunko Kelly," who had charge of the bath room for many years, and who had seen Merrill stripped many times, tried to point out the error, but the body was in such decomposition that it was extremely difficult to make positive identification. The question as to the actual killing of Merrill by Tracy will, in all probabilities, remain forever unanswered. However, this is getting ahead of the story.



A posse of forty officers was formed and almost immediately the word was sent out that the escaped convicts were trapped in a wooded place halfway between Salem and the reform school. But not so. That night, while officers watched the woods, the convicts appeared in Salem, stopped J. W. Roberts on the street, took his clothing and sent him on in his underwear, stole a team and drove away. Bloodhounds were rushed from the penitentiary at Walla Walla, Washington. They came and hounded, but did no greater service than to encourage the morale of the posses with strenuous baying.

The following day this word came from Gervais, Ore.: "Tracy and Merrill were observed in a wheat field of Ellis Young near the Samuel Brown place at 2:45 this afternoon. Company D of Woodburn has arrived. The guards are closing in. The crisis is at hand."

But not so. The next day in the early morning the convicts appeared at the cabin of August King, a woodcutter, living near Gervais. They walked in and took some bread. Tracy didn't eat much. He rolled a cigarette then threw it away in disgust.

This, of course, gave a new clew, and a posse of 200 started on the trail. Meantime the



convicts had doubled back, and robbed Dr. C. S. White of a coat and a horse and buggy and disappeared again.

The next seen of them was near Gervais when Charles Tuh, a guard, saw them climb over a fence. He shot and missed. The men then turned up for breakfast at the home of A. Akers, near Monitor, and again dropped from sight.

June 13—The chase was simply a blind search.

June 14—The posses were called off.

June 16—Tracy and Merrill passed through Portland, probably on a trolley, held up three men on the south bank of the Columbia, made them furnish dinner and ferry them across the river to the Washington side. There they held up another farmer, took the clothes off the back of a second rancher whom they bound and gagged and fled into the timber back of Vancouver.

June 17—In a midnight fight with Bert Biesecker and Lon Davis, deputy sheriffs, Biesecker took a bullet through the coat sleeve. It was almost the only time Tracy ever fired and missed.

June 18—They appeared at LaCenter.

June 19—They appeared at a farm house three miles from La Center, demanded food and



disappeared again. About this time the convicts were forced to give way in public interest to King Edward VII of England, whose illness, it was feared, might prevent his coronation. The king got well.

July 3—Tracy appeared alone near Lake Washington. He told persons whom he forced to serve him with food that he had killed Merrill near Chehalis.

“I was tired of him, anyhow,” he said.

The same day Tracy ran into a posse that included Deputy Sheriffs Raymond, Bower and Williams, Karl Anderson, then a reporter for the Seattle Times, now assistant managing editor of the San Francisco Chronicle, and Louis B. Sefrit, another newspaperman. The clash occurred two miles from Bothel.

Tracy killed Raymond, Bower and Williams. Anderson fired three shots at Tracy and himself escaped death by a miracle. The governor of Washington called out the national guard. Two days later Tracy forced a Japanese to ferry him across from Port Madison and disappeared on a nautical junket on the sound. On Bainbridge Island he kidnapped John Anderson, a Swede farm hand and took him along as his personal flunkey.



July 9—Tracy and Merrill were both reported surrounded at Orolia, although Merrill was dead at the time. Again capture seemed certain. But not so. The next day Tracy made a farmer named Johnson go to Tacoma and buy a revolver and some ammunition for him on threat of murdering Johnson's whole family.

July 11—Tracy broke through another cordon after a hot but bloodless fight near Covington. Hounds found a new trail. It was reported that Merrill had shown up at Ravensdale and that Tracy was organizing a gang which he intended to head as a second Jesse James.

July 14—Tracy had outwitted his pursuers again and lost himself. A reward of \$6,000 was offered.

July 15—Merrill's body was found near Chehalis by a woman and her son picking blackberries.

July 17—Tracy was again reported in a trap—and out again.

Then for a time Tracy dropped out of the public eye until the matter of the Fitzsimmons-Jeffries fight had been settled.

July 23—Tracy, looking fresh and rested, ate breakfast in the vicinity of Palmer. It was



the first seen of him in days. Apparently he had been resting and taking in the news of the fight.

August 1—Tracy crossed the Columbia into Eastern Washington carrying four guns and 200 rounds of ammunition. He was headed for the Hole-in-the-Wall.

August 5—C. V. Drazon, a farmer living near Odessa, Wash., found this note pinned on his door: "To whom it may concern—Tell Mr. Cudihue (the sheriff of King County, Washington), to take a tumble and let me alone or I will fix him plenty. I will be on my way to Wyoming. If your horses are good would swap with you. Thanks for a cool drink."

The next day was the last for Tracy. But they did not take him alive. The first brief flash from Spokane read: "Tracy's race is run. The notorious outlaw killed himself last night by shooting with a revolver."

He had been wounded in the right leg between the knee and thigh in a battle with a posse under Sheriff Gardner. He committed suicide twenty minutes after being wounded. His body was found at daybreak that morning in a wheat-field, the revolver tightly grasped in his right hand."



Today ye erect your scaffolds,
Where tomorrow monuments rise;
Today with the rabble ye crucify,
Whom tomorrow ye canonize.

—*Frank D. Blue.*



CHARLES DROCKER RIDES OUT

IN MAY, 1915, Charles Drocker, a yegg, (safe blower) quietly assumed his place in the prison line, having been sent up for a term of ten years from Multnomah county.

The word "quiet" is used advisedly, as he was the most unostentatious prisoner ever inside prison walls. Almost his sole companion was another yegg, Frank Wagner, with whom he occasionally had a word or two. The old "saw" that "still waters run deep," was realized by the officials in the case of Drocker, to such an extent that he and Wagner were kept in the dungeon at intermittent periods, seemingly more for safe keeping than anything else, as the trumped up charges of misconduct were more of an excuse than reality. However subsequent events proved the officials were laboring under no false theories so far as both of these men were concerned, but they could not go on forever putting men in the dungeon without more reason than mere sus-



picion, so they were released in the yard. But Drocker did not tarry for long.

One day in June, 1916, Drocker failed to show up for the noon count, and instinctively the officials knew that Charley had taken short leave. But how could a man make an escape from a prison yard in broad daylight with five hundred convicts swarming about? That was a genuine mystery.

Search was immediately instituted by the full official force, and not a hole was there left unexplored; not a board that was left undisturbed—but no Drocker. For two days and nights the search continued without surcease, but to no avail. Finally it became noised about that he had crawled underneath an automobile truck which was unloading at the kitchen door, and went out with the machine right from under the nose of a guard not ten feet away, dropping to the ground outside, no one knows where. He was not heard from until a year or two later when word came from France that he had received numerous wounds and as many decorations for bravery in the late war.

One curious feature of the foregoing escape that can be fully appreciated only by prison inmates, is, that more than a score of men in the yard claimed to have seen Drocker go under the



automobile. In view of the fact that one or more of that number would have "snitched," (to use a prison term, meaning informed on him) it is a fore-gone conclusion that Charley got away with not more than one, possibly two, witnesses. When a man starts in telling his friends goodbye before leaving, he finds himself forestalled by the officials, for some one is sure to scatter the news.



Run along, I've no time for a quitter;
I have troubles enough and to spare,
And the prizes of life only go to the man
Who is ready to do and dare.

—*No. 3117, Auburn Prison*



WHEN I GO OUT

O be to me tender, leaves that wait outside
This sullen wall, and keep inviolate,
Until I come to you with love-dumb lips
From out of this dull tenement of hate;
Out of the fresh breathing of the earth
To draw allayment of my rasping fear,
My woundings and my frettings, till my mind
Is soothed by winds that draw like nurses near,
To tend me on my bed of living grass
And all the hush of spring shall by my cover;
The hills shall stand as guards about my peace;
And the audacious sun shall be my lover

When I go out O roads of all the world!
O Beauty, fields and cities, do not fail!
Wait, strong friends, my coming—let my heart
Once more drink glory on a careless trail!

—*Charles Ashley, Leavenworth Prison.*



CLARKE GOES OVER THE TOP

GEORGE CLARKE was another of those quiet, unobtrusive men who slip along through life without attracting much attention, except when caught in the act. Of powerful build, even disposition and courageous nature, Clarke was ready at all times to meet most any emergency that might arise.

During the rainy spring of 1916, George was employed with quite a large gang of men who were clearing land outside the walls under gun guard. This gang were all housed on a lower tier of the south cell house, and at night on coming in from work, were allowed to hang their wet clothing on the steam radiators along the wall across the corridor from their cells. At night only two guards are on duty in the cell wings, and as the regular counts were made, it was an easy matter to keep track of the position of the guards.

One Sunday afternoon Clarke asked permission to remain in his cell instead of going out in the yard with the other prisoners. During his lay-



in he sawed the bars of his cell door from the inside until they almost severed. Then tearing up a blanket or two, he made quite a length of strong rope, after which he stretched himself on his bunk for a quiet nap, knowing he would have no time for sleep during the succeeding forty-eight hours. In the meantime during the preceeding week, and shielded by clothing hanging on the radiators, he had, a little at a time, succeeded in severing one of the outside window bars, smearing the fresh cut with tobacco juice and dirt so that it would not be readily noticed during the day.

After the twelve o'clock count on this particular night, Clarke arose and pressing his face close to the bars of his cell door, had no difficulty in determining the exact time the guards were making the count in the north wing. Then he got busy. Grasping the bars, sawed at one end, with his powerful hands, he had no difficulty in bending them to one side enough to admit his passage through into the corridor. Taking his blanket rope with him, he sprang across the corridor to the window where he simply crushed through the weakened bars as though they were so much straw, dropping outside to a pile of wood. Racing some fifty feet along the top of this wood pile, he brought up at an angle of the prison proper and the auditorium.



Climbing the window bars, he reached the roof of the auditorium and from there to the roof of the cell house was but a short boost. Losing not a second of time he fastened one end of the rope around a certain ventilator stack, which he had long since located as standing in a direct line with an outside window, glanced down just in time to see the front yard guard making his way for shelter, threw the loose rope end over the parapet and slid down to the window which the rope just barely touched.

Grasping the window bars he hastily climbed down, his body showing in full view against the bright lights within, to any one who might have happened to look that way. As it was, no one saw the huge spider speeding to the soft ground below, and in less than five minutes from the time Clarke left his cell he was walking up the steps to a guard tower that was vacant at night, through which he noiselessly sped to the narrow patrol walk outside the walls from which he dropped to the ground—and freedom.

Frantic search was made for the missing prisoner some ninety minutes later, but by the time the alarm was given and the posse started, Clark was "riding the rods" of a fast freight speeding south, which had been included in his



itinerary and timed to a nicety.

His liberty was of few months enjoyment, however, as he was later picked up in a general roundup of a certain district by the police of Los Angeles, identified by his finger prints, and returned to Oregon to finish his sentence.




Alone by the grated window,
I mused in the after-glow;
The life I had lived unfolded—
I dwelt in the long ago;
Saw only blight and sorrow,
Roamed only the land of tears,
And never a golden moment came
Out of the buried years.

Like unto a cloud it faded,
Yet sadder it left me then;
I had traversed the vale of shadows
In my search for souls of men;
Had bowed at the crumble ruins
Of my hopes and fears that day,
As I gazed at the dying colors
On the rim of the far away.

- *By a Woman Prisoner.*



ESCAPE OF FREDDY WEAVER

URING May, 1911, Fred Weaver was sent up from Wasco County on a sentence of five to fifteen years for the crime of burglary. Subsequent events proved that Fred was a good burglar all right enough, but like most other "good" burglars, he was not good enough to burgle and keep out of jail at the same time.

Fred was employed in the bakery department which at that time was located in the first story of the prison addition in which was located the mess hall on the second floor and the hospital on the third. After about six months of toil, Fred grew tired of prison monotony and decided to take a much needed vacation, hitting upon a plan that was both unique and successful.

Fred's working hours for each day began at 4:30 a. m., and in order to get the necessary amount of sleep he formed the habit of going to his cell earlier than others of the kitchen force,



who all celled on the same tier. When the early evening count was taken at seven o'clock, the guards never disturbed the silent form huddled under the blankets in cell 274, as they knew the man was an early riser and needed rest. Fred, taking advantage of this fact, used it as his "ace in the hole."

One Sunday afternoon, his cell partner having previously gone to the hospital because of a fancied illness, and to avoid questions later, Fred fixed up a dummy under his blankets that looked true to life from the corridor, and then returned to his work in the bakery. When the kitchen help straggled to their cells after six o'clock, Freddy hid out in the basement. At seven o'clock, the guard going through all departments to see that everything was alright, failed to spot Fred behind a stack of flour brrrels, and another guard taking the seven o'clock cell house count failed to distinguish the dummy from a real person, so neatly was it made up in the bunk.

That was all that was necessary to Fred; the rest was easy. After waiting but a short while to assure himself that the dummy had been properly counted, Fred boldly and industriously set to work sawing his way out. After getting through the first set of bars he found himself in the prison



yard, a long way from liberty. But Fred had that all figured out beforehand, so he lost no time in getting to work on another set of window bars leading into the basement of the prison proper, this time breaking into prison instead of out. Crossing the basement after breaking a lock on an intervening door, being small of stature, he squeezed through another set of bars which he had pried apart with a stick of wood. This let him out into the front yard and after waiting for the yard guard to make his regular rounds, Fred calmly walked over to a stairway leading to the but recently vacated guard tower, softly ascended, walked through the tower and out on the runway, from which he dropoed to the ground—and liberty.

Oh, yes; the inside guards counted the aforementioned dummy all night and were "ranked" for it the following day, but that did not bring Freddy into the fold. However, he was captured in Seattle a few months later and is still "doing time," for immediately upon the expiration of his sentence he returned to his old trade of burglar, was apprehended in a short time and given another sentence of eight years.



“THREE-MINUTE” WAGNER

IN THE FALL of 1914, two German boys, Frank Wagner and Carl Weinegal, made an escape from their cell to the outside by digging a tunnel downward in the heart of a brick wall.

Both of these boys worked in the bakery and celled together on a lower tier of brick-walled cells. Incidentally, a part of their get-away scheme consisted of keeping their cell spick and span and highly decorated with penants, fancy doilies and pillow tops, and as visitors were shown along these cells every day the decorative scheme of all cells in that particular tier were never disturbed.

For many weeks Frank and Carl kept digging, a bit at a time, starting in on the brick wall about two feet up from the floor and near the cell door. They made a hole sufficiently large to admit egress, which necessitated leaving but one row of bricks between them and the corridor. It was a tight squeeze but they made it in due time, carrying



away the loose brick and mortar in their pockets, cell buckets and newspapers. During the day they stretched a fancy doily or two tightly across the hole, so when cells were officially inspected no one thought of pulling down this highly ornamental (and useful) object.

After weeks of digging they succeeded in boring a hole straight down the inside of the brick wall to the basement below, and now everything was all ready for the break. The final night arrived and they started their crawl for freedom. In dropping from the ceiling to the concrete floor of the basement one of the boys fell on his head, which put him out of commission for some time, while the other one twisted one leg so that walking was very painful. Not a bright start by any means, but they were forced to go on, as they could not reach the hole and crawl back. And then, too, the hole in the basement ceiling would be discovered the first thing in the morning; go they must, even though in their crippled condition, capture was almost a certainty.

Slowly they worked out through bars that had been pried loose, into the front yard, slipping across to steps leading to the patrol walk along the wall from which they dropped to the ground outside. At this inopportune time a mongrel dog set



up a ki-yi that attracted the attention of a guard in a near-by tower, who started shooting and set off the general alarm. The boys made a run for it but were heavily handicapped with their crippled bodies, but at that they succeeded in evading the pursuers for two days before they were picked up and returned to prison. On release at the expiration of his sentence, Weinegal was deported, but Wagner remained in this country.

Frank Wagner was probably the most capable safe-blower on the Pacific coast. "Three-Minute-Wagner" he was called, as he required but three minutes or less to open most any safe in the country. His method was a secret which he never divulged, but many safes throughout the country bore mute evidence that he thoroughly understood his business, and time and again he has proven that his sobriquet was no idle boast.

On release from prison Frank immediately "touched off" a safe he had had in mind for some time, but in six months and two days he was again returned to prison, this time under a sentence of forty years.

Less than a year later he made another escape, but this time right from under gun guard while working in the brick yard and in broad daylight. He skipped through into a brush lined creek



close by and traveled with all speed possible until he reached the wooded hills some five miles distant, where all trace of him faded out. However, some three months later, the inevitable woman proved his undoing. Word was received by the officials that he was at a certain house in Clatsop county and a small posse was quietly formed who proceeded to the place designated without arousing suspicion. Surrounding the house, Wagner was called, and he came out shooting, but a well directed bullet brought to earth this outlaw, who, had he used his shrewd and clever brain along legitimate lines, would have made for himself a place worth while in the realm of whatever he choose to follow.



DARING ATTEMPTS TO ESCAPE

QUANY DARING attempts to escape have been made in the Oregon penitentiary, but for sheer, downright nerve, pitted against one chance in a thousand for success, there is nothing yet to compare with the foolhardy effort of three men from the shoe shop in August, 1917.

The shoe shop at that time was located directly over the rotunda of the prison. In the hallway just outside the shop, was a short stairway leading to the roof of the cell houses, but half way up the stairs was a door, secured with a heavy padlock. There were but four men working in the shop at the time, three of whom decided to take leave of their sordid surroundings, so one morning about nine o'clock, they picked the lock on the stair door and quickly ascended to the roof, taking with them some sixty feet of rope which they had secured in some mysterious manner at a previous date.

Fastening one end of the rope to a solid foot-



ing on the roof, they threw the other end over the parapet and one by one, slid down to the ground. On the way down they passed between two windows of the warden's office and the front office clerical force, who were all busy at the time, but had any of them glanced up from their work they could not have failed to notice the three as they passed out of the open front gate, some fifty feet distant. The runaways succeeded in hot-footing soome two hundred yards before they were discovered by a couple of trustys, who gave an alarm and the chase was on, ending in the return of all three of the truants.

This same shop, before it became a shoe foundry, figured in another episode, though while no thought of escape was in evidence at the time, later developments forced the interested party to make the effort. It happened in this way:

The female ward of the prison is located in the second story of the administration building, and separated from the shoe shop in the prison proper by a mere brick wall some two feet thick. An old saying is that "love laughs at locks and bars;" brick walls might as well have been included.

Now a year or two previous to this particular



time, a section of the wide base board in the shoe shop had been neatly cut out so that when replaced loose it would not be noticed. A hole was then dug through the brick wall, leading into what was then a store room of the women's ward. By the underground system of communication in vogue in all prisons, the women, six in number, were advised as to what was taking place, and they, with common consent and mutual desire, set to work on their side of the wall, covering the results of their labor by pasting newspapers clear around the room, but leaving the one over the hole so that it could be removed at will.

A prisoner whom we will call "Doc," for the reason he worked in the hospital, and his female accomplice were sent here together on a fifteen-year sentence, and for some time Doc (and a select few) patronized this hole-in-the-wall whenever occasion permitted. It was dangerous business, as the possibility of getting caught functioned at about 99 per cent, and as luck would have it, Doc was the fall guy.

One day Doc was tipped off that the matron would be away all afternoon, so he made for the secret entrance at the first opportunity. During visits of that sort, time flies without notice, which the pair discovered to their sorrow, for just as Doc



was about to leave the room, the matron's voice was heard in the hall. With the matron were one or two visitors, and woman-like they talked and talked, standing in the hall and shutting off Doc's escape to the hole. And holy horrors! The five o'clock bell was ringing! In five minutes, the count! And Doc missing!

The jig was up. Doc, perforce must remain missing, which he did. For nine days he stuck to that room, planning a way out. After the excitement died down he prepared to make good his escape, intending to take the girl with him, dressed as a man in clothes smuggled through the hole.

One morning about five o'clock, he proceeded to tie up the other women prisoners, intending to tie the matron, too, take her keys and walk out with his accomplice. His first prisoner was a game little colored girl, who was willing enough to be tied if it would help the plot along, but the next one, seeing a chance to make herself solid and perhaps gain a pardon, (which she did) changed her mind regarding the prearranged programme, threw open a window and proceeded to wake up the western half of the State of Oregon with her screeches. That settled it. Doc flew for the hole-in-the-wall and attempted to hide in the prison, but was found in a few moments, and it is needless to add, "them days is gone forever."



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